

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4674

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SECDEF FOR ASD/ISA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS ET US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S DISCUSSION WITH FONMIN ON MILITARY

ASSISTANCE MATTERS

REF: A. ADDIS 6120

B. ADDIS 6337

C. CMAAG DTG 191301Z MAR 75 (NOTAL)

1. AMB CALLED ON FONMIN KIFLE MAY 31. KIFLE SAID CHARGE MEKBIB IN WASHINGTON HAD HELD DISCUSSION WITH ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE IN WHICH LATTER HAD ASSURED THAT EVERY EFFORT WAS BEING MADE TO ACHIEVE DELIVERY OF MAJOR ITEMS BY END OF SUMMER.

2. HOWEVER, KIFLE WISHED TO WARN THAT THERE ARE "SERIOUS MISGIVINGS" AMONG SOME OFFICIALS OF GOE THAT USG DOES NOT REALLY INTEND TO DELIVER NEEDED ITEMS AT ALL BECAUSE OF "POLITICAL FACTORS". HE SAID SOME OFFICERS EVEN BELIEVE THAT USG IS DELIBERATELY DELAYING SO THAT IN EVENT OF AN OFFENSIVE BY ERITREAN INSURGENTS DURING SUMMER RAINS, NEW USG AIRCRAFT WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE, AND THUS USG WILL AVOID BEING BLAMED BY ERITREAN REBELS. KIFLE SAID HE KNEW USG WELL ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THESE SUSPICIONS ARE WITHOUT MERIT, BUT THEY ARE SO WIDESPREAD AS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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FORM A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM IN US-GOE RELATIONS IF SUBSTANTIAL PRO-

GRESS IS NOT MADE BOTH IN USG COMMITMENTS ON DELIVERY DATES AND IN ACTUAL DELIVERIES. HE POINTED OUT THAT USG HAS NEVER YET INDICATED ANY DELIVERY DATES FOR F-5E'S, AND THIS LACK OF ANY FIRM COMMITMENT WAS CAUSE OF GREAT CONCERN. HE ASKED AMB TO CONVEY ALL THIS TO DEPT DURING AMB'S UPCOMING CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON.

3. AMB SAID HE WOULD CONVEY, BUT WANTED KIFLE TO KNOW THAT THESE SUSPICIONS, WHICH SEEM ALL TOO CHARACTERISTIC OF SOME ETHIOPIANS, HAVE NO FOUNDATION IN FACT.

4. AMB SAID THAT ON F-5A'S THERE IS NOW A GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT THERE CAN BE A SUBSTANTIAL ADVANCE IN DELIVERY TIME (FROM SEPT-OCT DATES PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED TO GOE). A FIRM COMMITMENT COULD NOT YET BE MADE, BUT PROSPECTS LOOK GOOD.

5. AMB SAID SUSPICIONS CAN WORK IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, AND EMBASSY AND MAAG ARE VERY PUZZLED ABOUT GOE DECISION TO POSTPONE TRAINING CYCLE FOR 43D RADAR. KIFLE HIMSELF AND OTHER GOE OFFICIALS HAD PRESSED VERY HARD FOR ARRANGEMENTS SURROUNDING SALE OF RADAR, AND NOW TO HAVE POSTPONEMENT WAS NEARLY INCOMPREHENSIBLE. USG WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE IN POSITION OF BEGGING GOE TO ACCEPT US MILITARY EQUIPMENT. HOWEVER, GOE SHOULD CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THE EFFECT ON GOE INTERESTS, IN TERMS OF DELAYS AND ALSO COSTS, IF PREVIOUSLY PLANNED TRAINING TO BEGIN JUNE 9 IS MISSED. NEXT TRAINING CYCLE COULD NOT BEGIN BEFORE SEPT. REGARDLESS OF OTHER NEEDS SUCH AS AIRCRAFT, IT MADE NO SENSE NOT TO PROCEED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE WITH PREPARATIONS FOR ACQUIRING AIR DEFENSE RADAR. FRANKLY, EMBASSY SURMISED THIS TO BE A KIND OF GAMESMANSHIP DESIGNED TO PRESSURE USG ON DELIVERIES OF OTHER ITEMS. SUCH PRESSURES DON'T WORK, AND WILL RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL DELAYS AND COSTS THAT ARE NOT IN GOE INTEREST.

6. WITHOUT DIRECTLY DENYING ABOVE SURMISE, KIFLE REHEARSED ARGUMENTS ALREADY GIVEN TO CHMAAG BY MINDEF: THAT RADAR IS PART OF INTEGRATED DEFENSE SYSTEM INVOLVING F-5A'S AND E'S, AND UNTIL TOTAL SYSTEM PACKAGE IS KNOWN GOE CANNOT PURCHASE ONLY A PORTION; AND THAT RADAR, IF INSTALLED BEFORE AIR DEFENSE IS READY, WOULD BE VULNERABLE TO AIR ATTACK. AMB SAID WE SEE MATTER QUITE DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT GOE NEEDS RADAR, AND IN ORDER TO GET AND USE THE RADAR IT MUST AT SOME TIME START TRAINING BADLY NEEDED PERSONNEL.

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IN ANY CASE WE MUST MAKE IT QUITE CLEAR, SO THERE WILL BE NO RECRIMINATIONS LATER, THAT THERE WILL BE COSTLY CONSEQUENCES FOR GOE INTERESTS.

7. COMMENT: WE TAKE SERIOUSLY KIFLE'S REPORT OF GRAVE SUSPICIONS WITHIN GOE REGARDING USG MOTIVES. SUSPICIONS ARE COMPOUNDED BY TOTAL ABSENCE OF US COMMITMENT FOR ANY DELIVERY TIME FOR F-5E'S, ON WHICH WE HAVE GIVEN ONLY VAGUE ASSURANCES DURING MANY

DISCUSSIONS OVER LAST SIX MONTHS. AS FOR RADAR, PROBLEMS IN COORDINATING THE PACKAGE IN WASHINGTON HAVE DELAYED THE PRESENTATION OF AN ACCEPTABLE LETTER OF OFFER TO GOE, SO OUR HANDS ARE NOT ENTIRELY CLEAN. NEVERTHELESS, GOE IN POSTPONING TRAINING IS TAKING SOMEWHAT IRRATIONAL STEP. IT IS LIKELY AN EFFORT TO PUT PRESSURE ON USG REGARDING F-5'S, BUT IT ALSO PROBABLY REFLECTS UNEASINESS AND RELUCTANCE AMONG EAF OFFICERS WHO WILL HAVE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OPERATING AND MAINTAINING SOPHISTICATED RADAR. MAAG HAS OBSERVED THIS SYNDROME IN OTHER CASES; IT MAY HAVE STIMULATED IDEA OF PRESSURE TACTIC THAT ALSO POSTPONES DAY WHEN OFFICERS WILL HAVE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR AIR DEFENSE.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: (A) FIRMING UP JUNE DELIVERY OF F-5A'S FROM IRAN, AND (B) SORTING OUT OF PRIORITIES SO THAT FIRM AND HOPEFULLY EARLY DATE CAN BE GIVEN FOR DELIVERY OF F-5E'S (INCLUDING POSSIBLE DELIVERY OF F-5E'S RECOVERED FROM VIETNAM). IN ADDITION, IT IS FELT THAT EXPEDITED DELIVERY OF THE FOUR EACH MH-IH HELICOPTERS PROGRAMED IN FY 74 MAP (REF C) WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT WAY TO PROJECT USG SENSITIVITY TO EPMG REQUIREMENTS.

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